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# Food and Nutrition

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## USDA ISSUES PROPOSED NEW FOOD STAMP REGULATIONS

NUMBER 9

The U.S. Department of Agriculture today proposed new regulations for its Food Stamp Program to implement amendments to the Food Stamp Act enacted in Public Law 91-671.

Concurrent with the proposed regulations, USDA also announced national uniform income eligibility standards and new issuance tables which spell out how much participants pay for their food stamp allotments.

Public comments are invited on the proposals, which will be published in the Federal Register on Friday, April 16, 1971. (Income eligibility standards and issuance tables for Alaska and Hawaii will be in the Register Saturday, April 17.) Written comments may be mailed or delivered by Monday, May 17 to James E. Springfield, Director, Food Stamp Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Individual copies of the Federal Register containing the proposed regulations may be purchased for 20 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Specify the date of the desired issue.

Highlights of the proposals announced today are --

Income and resources: Eligibility for the Food Stamp Program will be determined according to uniform national standards set by the Secretary of Agriculture. Standards for Alaska and Hawaii have been adjusted in accordance with the separate poverty guidelines established for those States.

Monthly maximum income eligibility levels are:

<u>Household size</u>	<u>48 States and D.C.</u>	<u>Alaska</u>	<u>Hawaii</u>
1-person	\$160	\$200	\$184
2-person	210	262	242
3-person	293	366	337
4-person	360	450	414
5-person	427	534	491
6-person	493	616	567
7-person	547	684	629
8-person	600	750	690
Each additional person	Add \$53	Add \$66	Add \$61

The standards apply to all households, including those receiving public assistance.

Resources other than income, such as savings accounts, negotiable securities and certain property, would be limited to \$1500 per household, plus an additional \$1500 for households of two or more containing a member 65 years of age or over.

Excluded from resources are the value of such items as a home, household goods, car, personal effects, cash value of life insurance policies, income-producing property, and tools and machinery essential to self-support. However, resources would include such other types of nonliquid assets as buildings, land, or other real or personal property, at fair market value.

Food Stamp allotment: Allotments of food stamps would continue to be geared to cost of the economy diet, with the amount of money paid by households not to exceed 30 percent of income. There would be no payment required from one and two-person households with incomes under \$20 per month, or from all other households with incomes under \$30.

Under the new law, participants may elect to have their payments for food stamps deducted regularly from money they get under any federally-aided public assistance program. Households would also be able to elect, at time of issuance, to receive three-quarters, one-half, or one-quarter of their monthly food stamp allotment, with their payment adjusted accordingly. If a family chooses less than its full allotment during any purchase period, it would not be permitted to return later for the balance, for that period.

Examples of monthly allotments and amounts to be paid by recipients in the 48 contiguous States and District of Columbia:

<u>Number of Persons in Household:</u>				
	1	2	4	6
<u>Food Stamp Allotment:</u>				
	\$32	\$60	\$108	\$148
<u>Purchase Requirement</u>				
<u>Net Income</u>				
\$ 0- 19.99	0	0	0	0
20- 29.99	1	1	0	0
-----				
100-109.99	18	23	25	27
-----				
150-169.99	26	36	41	43
-----				
190-209.99		48	53	55
-----				
250-269.99			71	73
-----				
290-309.99			83	85
-----				
330-359.99			95	97
-----				
450-479.99				133

NOTE: Because food costs are determined to be significantly higher in Alaska and Hawaii, food stamp allotments are greater than those of other States shown above. Separate issuance tables for Alaska and Hawaii will be published in the Federal Register Saturday, April 17.



Hardship allowances: In determining eligibility for the program and the amount of money the eligible household is to pay ("purchase requirement") for its allotment of food stamps, a net income figure is determined by deducting certain "hardship" allowances from the total money coming into the household.

The proposed regulations would permit deductions for shelter costs that exceed 30 percent of income, medical payments in excess of \$10 per month, and child care costs necessary for a household member to accept or continue employment, and unusual expenses resulting from disaster or casualty losses. Payments on business-related land or equipment by the self-employed would not be deductible, nor would educational expenses of students.

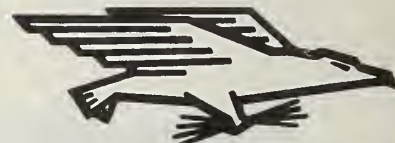
Household definition: All members of a household under 60 years of age must be related by blood, affinity, or other legal relationship sanctioned by State law, in order for the household to be eligible for food stamps. Foster, adopted and other children under 18 years old may be in the household. Also, an unrelated roomer or boarder is not considered part of the household, and will not disqualify the household from the Food Stamp Program.

Tax dependents: No household could be allotted food stamps if it has a member over 18 years old who is claimed as a dependent for Federal income tax purposes by a member of another household which itself is not eligible for either food stamps or USDA donated foods.

Work registration: The proposed regulations set work registration as part of the application process and subsequent recertifications for food stamps, if the household has an able-bodied member between 18 and 65, unless that member is: (1) responsible for the care of dependent children under 18 or of incapacitated adults, (2) a student enrolled at least half time in any school or training program recognized by any Federal, State or local government agency, (3) working at least 30 hours per week. The work registration form is to be forwarded by the food stamp certification office to the State or Federal employment office for the area. For the household to be eligible for stamps, the registered member or members of the household must cooperate in seeking, and accept employment of a type and in a location reasonably consistent with physical and mental fitness, with consideration of transportation costs and commuting time, and at wages, including piece-rate basis, that are the highest of applicable Federal and State minimums or other authorized Federal regulations, but in no case less than \$1.30 per hour. The registrant would not be required to join, resign from, or refrain from joining any recognized labor organization as a condition of employment, nor accept work offered at a site which is undergoing a strike or lock-out.

Meal Service: Elderly participants who are so disabled or feeble that they cannot adequately prepare all of their own meals, may use food stamps to pay for "meals on wheels" delivered to them by non-profit meal services, if available. The delivery services would be authorized to redeem stamps by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service similarly to retailers and wholesalers.

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Dual food assistance: When a Food Stamp Program opens in a county or city that has been distributing USDA donated foods, both programs would be permitted at the State's request for a transition period up to three months. Both programs could be operated permanently provided the national eligibility standards are used for both programs, together with adequate controls to prevent double participation by the same household. "Operating expense funds" which are available to the States from USDA for family food donations could not be used for such permanent dual operations, however.

The proposed regulations also --

- Contain provisions aimed at eliminating abuses of the program. In addition to the new household definition and the tax dependency requirement, mandatory "quality control" plans are to be part of each State's Food Stamp Plan of Operation, and misuse of "authorization to purchase" cards (the document households get when certified for participation, commonly termed ATP cards) is to be subject to the same penalties as unauthorized issuance and use of the food stamp coupons themselves.

- Modify present "fair hearing" procedures so that applicants who are improperly denied benefits and subsequently gain them at a hearing

receive credit at state expense toward their purchase requirement to the extent that benefits were denied, and that households overcharged because of improper certification receive cash repayments.

- Permit continued eligibility of a certified household for 60 days following a move from one food stamp area to another, provided the household circumstances remain the same.

- Require each State to develop an "outreach" program to be approved by FNS as part of the State Food Stamp Plan of Operation.

## WHITE HOUSE FOLLOWUP CONFERENCE

Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the 26 panels and 8 task forces of the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health met in Williamsburg, Va., Feb. 5, to assess the progress made since the Conference was held in December 1969.

Copies of the report of the Follow-Up Conference are available from the Information Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.